THE NEW
SUNDAY EXPRESS

BENGALURU • SUNDAY • AUGUST 11, 2024 • ₹12.00 • PAGES 24 • LATE CITY EDITION

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JAISHANKAR MEETS MALDIVES PREZ, SAYS RELATIONS TAKE TOP PRIORITY

External Affairs Minister met Mohammed Muizzu on Saturday, affirmed New Delhi's commitment for development of the region

WATER PROJECTS HANDED TO ISLAND NATION

The foreign minister handed over water and sanitation projects in 28 islands of Maldives, which are commissioned under the Indian line of credit. "I thank the Government of India ... for always supporting the Maldives. Our enduring partnership continues to strengthen, bringing our nations closer through cooperation in security, development," Muizzu tweeted

INDIA TO HELP INTRODUCE UPI INTERFACE

- The water project has brought safe drinking water to 32 islands and has directly impacted the lives of 28,000 Maldivians, Jaishankar said. The sanitation project has introduced sewerage system in 17 islands, he added. All buildings come with solar rooftops | P7
- India signed an MoU with Maldives to bring the UPI interface to the island

1,000

MALDIVIAN CIVIL SERVANTS TO RECEIVE TRAINING FROM INDIA

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

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They Inspired A Nation.

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for our Olympians.

TEAM INDIA | adani

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Eco-sensitive area tag: States propose to omit private lands

50 of 135 TN villages suggested by Kasturirangan allegedly left out

SV KRISHNA CHAITANYA @ Chennai

THE final draft notification issued by the Union environment ministry on July 31 on declaration of ecologically sensitive areas (ESA) in the Western Ghats shows that some of the states, including Tamil Nadu, have proposed to include more reserve forest areas in the ESA than 'highly vulnerable' non-forest private land holdings as suggested by the Kasturirangan report. The plan by the state governments to leave private lands — where extensive human settlements have come up over the years — off the hook may lead to change in land-use pattern in the already fragmented hilly regions in the future and may trigger more Wayanad-like disasters, some experts said.

Incidentally, the July 31 notification came just a day after the deadly Kerala landslides that left more than 400 people dead. Six states —Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Goa, Gujarat and Maharashtra — covered under the notification have been dilly-dallying over the declaration of ecologically sensitive areas in the Western Ghats for the past 13 years.

A High-Level Working Group (HLWG) led by K Kasturirangan, which submitted its report to the Union environment ministry in April 2013, has recommended notification of 6,914 sq km area of Tamil Nadu in Western Ghats, including 135 villages of the state, as ecologically sensitive areas. But, according to sources, the state may have left out 50 villages with substantial human settlements from being designated as ESA and instead included reserve forests in the ESA category to comply with the land mandate.

The suspected error, intentional or unintentional, was made in 2013 as seen in the first draft notification dated November 13, 2013, issued by the ministry and continues to reflect in all the six draft notifications issued till date. P5

FULL SUPPORT TO REHAB: MODI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacts with a child affected by the landslide, at a hospital in Wayanad | PTI

POOJA NAIR @ Kalpetta

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi visited the landslide-ravaged areas of Wayanad on Saturday and promised all support in the relief and rehabilitation efforts. Stating that the Centre will stand with the state government in the rebuilding, the prime minister said funds will not be a constraint for the rehabilitation of survivors of the devastating landslides that swallowed Chooralmala and Mundakkai villages.

Modi, who undertook an aerial survey of the disaster-stricken areas, later visited the landslide spots at Chooralmala and Mundakkai. He walked through some of the affected areas for a closer look at the devastation. He also met survivors at a hospital and a relief camp, lending an ear to their concerns.

As per official records, the July 30 landslides have claimed 226 lives so far, with more than 130 missing.

"The country and the government are with the survivors. We wish to let the affected people know that they are not alone," he said after the review meeting at the collectorate conference hall in Kalpetta.

Modi said he has sought a detailed memorandum from the state government on the extent of damage and loss. "The Central government will act favourably once we get the memorandum," he said.

The PM assured that both the state and the Centre will join hands for the rehabilitation package. Central ministers and officials have already had a round of talks with Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and the state officials.

Later in the day, Pinarayi said the state government has requested the PM for financial help for rehabilitation. A note has been handed over to the PM, he added.

The prime minister said he was in contact with the state government ever since the tragedy occurred and that all the arms of the Central government were mobilised in the rescue and relief operations.

I would like to assure the survivors and victims that they are not alone in this time of distress. The nation, the Centre, the state, everyone, is with them... Funds will not be a constraint for rehabilitation

— Narendra Modi

A detailed assessment of the damage is underway and the initial assessment is that the loss incurred was to the tune of thousands of crores. The state would submit to the Centre a memorandum

— Pinarayi Vijayan

2 soldiers killed in encounter in poll-bound J&K

FAYAZ WANI @ Srinagar

TWO soldiers were killed while three other jawans and two civilians were injured in an encounter with militants in the forest area of Kokernag in poll-bound Jammu and Kashmir's Anantnag district on Saturday. The militants are said to be involved in the recent attacks on the Army in Doda.

A police official said acting on specific inputs about the presence of militants, a joint contingent of the Army, police and CRPF laid siege around the Ahlan Gagarmandu forest area in Kokernag on Saturday afternoon.

Kashmir Tigers, which is said to be an offshoot of Jaish-e-Mohammad, claimed its fighters are involved in the ongoing encounter. It is believed that two to three militants are trapped in the Army siege.

The gunfight is taking place in a high altitude area with thick under growth, large boulders and nallahs. The terrain poses a serious challenge to the jawans, a defence spokesman said.

SOMANATHAN APPOINTED NEW CABINET SECY

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet approved his candidature for two years from August 30 | P7

Bangladesh CJ forced to resign

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

ON a day when Chief Justice of Bangladesh Obaidul Hassan's forced resignation dominated the news cycle, rampant lawlessness, protests seeking the return of exiled former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, Hindu minorities demanding their right to safety and co-existence, and Chinese snooping were other issues that required interim leader Muhammad Yunus' immediate attention.

ATMs have also run dry and businesses are yet to take off in the riot-torn nation.

"The way things are at present in Bangladesh where three major powers are at play, there is nothing but chaos. China has deployed three ships in the Indian Ocean near the Bay of Bengal. We are rudderless literally," Prof Nazmul Ahsan Kalimullah, a political commentator in Bangladesh, told this newspaper.

Obaidul Hassan

Our chief justice resigned a few minutes back. His resignation letter has already reached the law ministry

— Prof Asif Nazrul, law adviser of the interim govt

On Saturday, Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan along with five appellate judges were forced to quit by students as there was apprehension that they could call a meeting to declare the interim government unconstitutional. High Court Judge Syed Refaat Ahmed is likely to replace Hassan.

Similarly, the vice-chancellor of Dhaka University was asked to step down.

Meanwhile, Hindus from all 64 districts got together at Shahbag seeking protection for themselves and their places of worship. At the border village of Sitalkuchi, thousands of Hindus urged the BSF to let them cross over to India. P9

Union ministers HD Kumaraswamy and Pralhad Joshi, former CMs BS Yediyurappa and Basavaraj Bommai, LoP R Ashoka, BJP state president BY Vijayendra, and party Karnataka in-charge Radha Mohan Das Agarwal in Mysuru on Saturday | UDAYASHANKAR S

EXPRESS READ

B'luru-M'luru railway connect impacted again

Mangaluru: Two days after train operations resumed between the coast and Bengaluru, operations again halted on Saturday after a landslip between Sakleshpur and Ballupet stations | P5

Two die as factory ceiling falls in Peenya

Bengaluru: Two labourers, Veeresh and Imam Sheik, died when the ceiling of a factory building collapsed on them at the industrial area in Peenya on Saturday. | P3

'Padayatra politics' cripples state government machinery

DEVARAJ B HIREHALLI @ Bengaluru

THE state government machinery seems to have taken a severe beating with the ruling Congress and Opposition BJP-JDS alliance continuing their "padayatra politics" over the alleged scams in the ST corporation and MUDA.

Many top officials are concerned over the developments in the past few weeks with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and most of his cabinet colleagues keeping away from office, affecting the day-to-day government work. Several important decisions, including officials' transfer, have been kept on hold for want of Siddaramaiah's consent.

Statements of BJP and JDS leaders BS Yediyurappa and HD Kumaraswamy that Siddaramaiah will step down as CM soon over the alleged scams also seem to have had an impact on top officials in the government. "The officials were also eagerly waiting for the next move of Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot – whether he would give permission to prosecute Siddaramaiah in the alleged MUDA scam or not, and if so when?," a top official said. P5

Govt green light for desi nuclear submarine expected this year

MAYANK SINGH @ New Delhi

Sunday Special

A government green light to enhance the attack capability of the Indian Navy is due this year through the manufacture of nuclear-powered submarines.

It is expected to serve as a deterrent to the Chinese Navy's increasing foray into the Indian Ocean Region. "The submarine will be more than 90% indigenous," sources said.

"By the end of the year, I think we should get the go-ahead for indigenous construction, as policymakers at every level have shown their inclination towards the project," a source said.

Since 2008, the Chinese Navy has been rapidly deploying various assets, including attack submarines, in the Indian Ocean region on anti-piracy duty. Prolonged deployments help gain familiarity and confidence. Additionally, Chinese survey vessels have been continuously operating in the region. In May, China completed sea trials of its Fujian aircraft carrier weighing a whopping 80,000 metric tonne. The PLA already has two active carriers — the 66,000-tonne Shandong and the 60,000-tonne Liaoning. "If any Chinese aircraft carrier comes close by, our nuclear submarine will serve as a deterrent because it can stay under water for close to a month."

THE NUCLEAR EDGE
Jan 1988
Indian Navy acquired INS Chakra, its first nuclear submarine from the Soviet Union on lease
INS Arihant
First indigenous nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine, was launched on July 26, 2009
INS Arihant's nuclear reactor activated in August 2013
INS Arihant inducted in the Indian Navy in 2016
Indian Navy's at present has 16 conventional submarines, most of which are over 20 years old
+350
China has more than 350 warships submarines
130
India's fleet strength
PROJECT APPROVAL FOR FIRST NUCLEAR-POWERED SUBMARINE EXPECTED THIS YEAR

There are two types of nuclear submarines, SSN and SSBN. SS stands for submersible ship; SSN is a nuclear-powered submarine; and SSBN is a nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine.

India already has SSBNs. They made the country's nuclear no-first use policy operational. SSNs have multiple mission utility like anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface warfare, besides intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance. SSBNs offer assured second strike in the event of a nuclear attack.

India's foray into the nuclear submarine domain began with the induction of INS Arihant. It is suitable for the policy of no-first use of nuclear weapons with maintenance of minimum credible deterrence, as part of the nuclear triad.